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The Musket

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1969

Gaming Adventures
Fans of the popular video game StarCraft now have a place to connect and exchange tips and strategies.
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The Cons of Concussions
The LHS Girl's Varsity Hockey team is doing all they can to educate themselves about how to avoid receiving concussions.
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Volume LIII Issue III— January 2012

Senate bill cuts required service for open campus

■ Ayesha Harisinghani
Jackie Kong
Staff Writers

The Student-Faculty Senate recently passed a bill dropping the 20-hour community-service requirement to receive open campus.

With Principal Natalie Cohen's signature, the bill is expected to become an official change to LHS policy next year.

Despite the high level of stress during junior year, the privilege of open campus can often be the silver lining amidst the anxiety. However, to be granted this privilege, juniors must currently complete half of their 40-hour community-service requirement.

That rule comes from Senate's Community Service Program Revision Bill (1993), which states: "Students will be expected to complete 20 hours of community service by the beginning of their junior year. If students have not completed 20 hours by this time, their privilege of open campus will be withheld until they do so."

The Social Action Committee of the Senate, which deals with issues related to community service at Lexington High School, first proposed the idea of eliminating the 20-hour requirement for open campus. Discussion began in late September to create a replacement bill.

Jesse Kao, a junior who chairs the committee, said, "We [the committee] saw

[SENATE, page 2]

Panera opens in Lexington Center

■ Kyle Harvey
Josh Karnofsky
Staff Writers

Staff photo by Adam Forstall

Customers enjoy the new Panera Bread in Lexington Center, which features a layout similar to other Paneras.

After several months of delays, Panera Bread opened at 1684 Massachusetts Ave. in Lexington Center on Nov. 28.

Previous businesses in Panera's current location have had trouble staying open. However, the new Lexington Panera may break the curse.

"Sales have exceeded our expectations." said Steve Harron, general manager of Panera Bread in Lexington.

Part of this early success may be ascribed to the decorations and large seating area, which reflect the priority Panera has placed on making its customers feel comfortable.

"We worked diligently with the town and historical society to design a cafe that we feel will work well for the Lexington community," said joint venture Greater Boston area director Gregg Godfrey in a press release quoted in the Lexington Patch.

Even with several other places to get breakfast or lunch in the Center, Lexington High School students believe that Panera has something new to offer.

"Panera provides a combination of the more specialized sandwich shop, Avenue Deli and the dessert and coffee-oriented Starbucks," said junior Adam Hoffman. "High school students can go to chill and relax at Panera while adults can go to sit down for a meal, giving it a

[PANERA, page 2]

Staff photo by Adam Forstall

Students Tova Weinronk, Jenna Grady and Colleen Hughes meet with George Elbaum during his visit to LHS.

Holocaust survivor shares with Facing History class

■ Brianna Lavelle
Staff Writer

On Nov. 29, George Elbaum, a survivor of the Holocaust, came to speak about his experience to Kathryn DeWitt's Facing History class.

The non-profit organization Facing History and Ourselves invited Elbaum to speak.

Elbaum was born in Warsaw in 1939. Three years after the Nazi invasion of Poland, he, his mother and his grandmother were the only members of his family that had not fallen victim to the Holocaust.

[SPEAKER, page 3]

LHS earns a spot on AP Honor Roll for first time

■ Jamie Yang
Stephanie Yin
Staff Writers

The Lexington school district's scores and increasing participation in Advanced Placement courses within the past three years have earned the district a spot on the College Board's second annual AP District Honor Roll.

Along with 366 other school districts, nationwide Lexington excelled in expanding its AP choices as well as successfully getting scores of 3 to 5 in an increasing percentage of its students.

According to a press release from Lexington Public Schools, "Achieving both of these goals is the ideal scenario for a district's Advanced Placement program, because it indicates that the district is successfully identifying motivated, academically prepared students who are likely to benefit most from AP coursework."

While Lexington High School provides classes that range from CP2 to AP, an increasing number of students are taking advantage of the opportunity to enroll in college-level courses, preparing them for a more rigorous curriculum in the future.

Karen Lin, a junior, said, "I think it's great that LHS gives students the opportunity to challenge themselves, while getting college credits done."

Like Lin, Nadine Shen

[AP HONOR ROLL, page 3]

Syllabi help students by eliminating confusion

■ Justin Kim
Staff Writer

At the beginning of a strenuous year-long course, students and teachers alike face the unknown. Teachers do not know their students well and students do not know what to expect from a class.

The anxiety and stress each student experiences in a new class can be minimized through course syllabi. It is essential to have a document that clearly outlines the content that will be covered and how it will be divided into units. Such a document can help students stay informed throughout the year.

Students support syllabi because they help them succeed in the course.

Daniel Seong, a freshman, said, "I want to have a syllabus because it helps me know what I am going to learn ahead of time and it also helps me study for tests."

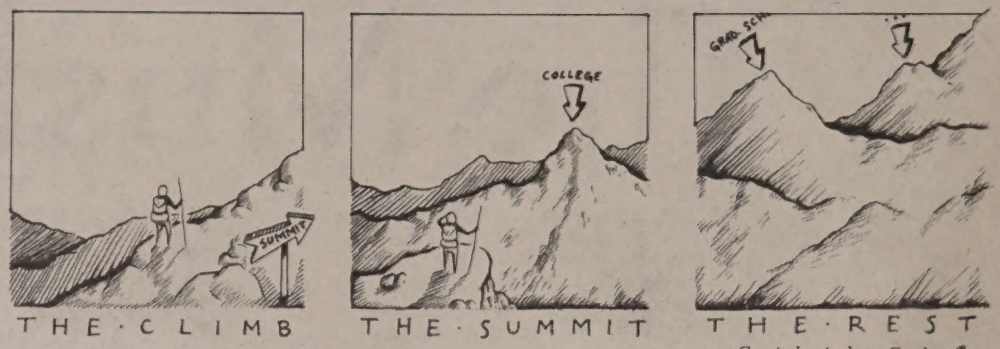
If a student is aware of the long-term plan for the course, he or she can make sense of what will be studied and understand what the relevance of each individual unit is. This knowledge can give students a better idea of the overall goals for the course and how they will work toward meeting them, helping them remain motivated throughout the year.

Syllabi can also help teachers have a clearer idea of what they will teach and when. When they have a plan for how long the class should spend on different units, teachers are better able to assess whether they are moving at the right pace. This allows them to adjust their speed during the year, as opposed to being forced to rush at the end of the course when they have not covered the required material.

Seong added, "A teacher who gives a syllabus to the students in his/her class seems more organized and approachable than a teacher who doesn't bother to hand one out."

In addition, syllabi help students think in terms of year- or semester-long ideas and questions, encouraging them to make connections between units and under-

[SYLLABI, page 3]



Comic by Andrew Goulet

For most LHS students, midterms increase stress

■ Hannah Kwon
Staff Writer

If midterms are implemented at Lexington High School, they will be added to the numerous tests of a high school student's academic life. Based on curriculum taught during the first half of the school year, these tests evaluate students' knowledge of the material learned during the initial months of school. However, the essential question arises: Are they really worth it? Should they be given to students?

The simple answer is "no." The countless disadvantages of having midterms outweigh any potential advantages. Midterms are stressful and even aggravating as high school students face many other challenges and obstacles of attending high school.

In addition to the stress concerning quarter grades, extracurriculars, after-school jobs and community service, having to relearn and review every concept learned during the first half of the school year only makes students busier and more overwhelmed.

The tests would create more work and anxiety among high-school students who want to work steadily through the year and not have to review half the curriculum when the year has not even ended yet.

Like finals, midterms cover a vast amount of material. For finals, teachers stop introducing new material halfway through June, to give students more time to review. However, teachers do not allow the same amount of class time to study for midterms, which contributes to increased student anxiety.

However, some students think that midterm exams may be beneficial.

"I think that there should be midterms because they help prepare you for finals," said Lauren Levine, a sophomore. "They give you an experience that will be similar to the final exam, which will make taking the final exam easier."

But if midterms really are tests that help students do well on final exams, then shouldn't they be more like practice tests, instead of real tests that affect students' grades?

These tests seem to evaluate a student's academic habits during the first half of the year, rather than actually aiding them to do well on the final exam. Even though it is important to have examinations based on material learned, it is significantly better for them to be in the form of final exams at the end of the year, when students' activities and extracurriculars are coming to a close.

There is also the issue of the midterm counting for a portion of the final grade, in comparison to a test, which only counts towards the quarter grade. Poor performance on a midterm can have a significant impact on students' final grades, which minimizes the positive effect of improved academic habits during the second half of the year.

"Midterms are an extreme source of stress," said Holly Carabbio, a sophomore. "It's stressful to know that one test can make up so much of your grade."

Unfairness is also an issue, as different teachers have varying standards for how a midterm score influences a final grade, giving advantages to some students and disadvantages to others.

Therefore, having one final exam is the best option for students. Keeping midterms out of the picture limits the stress and anxiety which are already so present at LHS.

PANERA - PAGE 1

unique advantage."

Still, students voiced their concern about how a franchise like Panera would affect the smaller local businesses in the Center. Avenue Deli, a local sandwich shop, originally shared this fear.

"My initial feelings were a little bit of worry, because as a small business down here we take a lot of pride in our customers and we all have to share the customers that come to Lexington among all the restaurants here," said Mike Richards, owner of Avenue Deli.

Panera's size, with 1,504 stores in 40 states, can be intimidating to the smaller businesses in Lexington.

"Panera is a giant business, they do a great job, they have a lot of locations while Avenue Deli is a one-store location," said Richards.

After the months of anticipation, LHS students lost no time in eating at Panera.

"I love their food and it's awesome to have a Panera in Lexington," said Manavi Nagai, a junior.

Even the Avenue Deli has had positive feedback.

When asked if his attitude towards Panera had changed, Richards said, "Absolutely, it has changed 110 percent. I think it is a great addition to the Center. I think it's sorely needed on the other end of the center, because of all the empty real estate that was down there for so long. Also, it draws in people that aren't necessarily from Lexington to Lexington, which can benefit my business and the other small businesses down here."

Panera's effect on LHS students goes beyond lunch breaks. Like many other businesses in the center, Panera is willing to hire students.

"Mostly we hire people based on personality; we hire the smile first and then we train the skill," said Harron.

According to Spero Dimas, a senior and recently hired employee, Panera is a great place to work, with easygoing coworkers and managers.

"It's different than other establishments in the sense that you feel like you're working for your own home and not just another company," he said.

The Panera in Lexington is open Monday through Saturday from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. and on Sunday from 6:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

SENATE - PAGE 1

that it was not important to have community service in order to have free blocks."

The requirement can also be a source of pressure for students to complete community service as fast as possible, rather than taking the time to find a project that will be more enjoyable and meaningful for the student.

When put in place, the bill will eliminate the requirement for current juniors and will apply to all juniors and seniors in the following years.

Part of the rationale for the requirement was that it encouraged students to start performing community service early, rather than waiting until their junior or senior year.

Because the bill will eliminate this incentive, the Senate passed another bill to encourage students to start community service early.

This second bill modifies a 1989 bill that required each class council to organize a community service event. In the 1989 version, no student could receive community service credit for participation in the class project. The new bill eliminates that provision, such that students can now gain hours for taking part in the class service project.

The Senate hopes that this additional opportunity will help students earn their required community service hours.

After consulting her leadership team, Cohen signed the bills on Jan. 11.

SYLLABI - PAGE 2

stand the broader context of the concepts they study. Syllabi take on a more significant role in college, and therefore it is important for teachers to distribute them in high school so that students are able to use them to stay on track and plan ahead.

A syllabus is beneficial to both the student and the teacher; it helps them work cooperatively toward a class goal with greater understanding and clarity. Teachers should distribute syllabi in their classes because they have the potential to make a positive impact on how students learn and communicate with the instructor.

AP HONOR ROLL - PAGE 1

Molesky, also a junior, had positive feedback about AP classes.

"They help me think about more things in detail," she said. "I have gained a deeper understanding and interest."

Lexington has also increased the percentage of exams taken by minority students.

"Part of it has to do with the change in the diversity of the school," said Lester Eggleston, LHS's director of guidance and counseling. "We've always had bright students, but I think over the last five years or so, the makeup of our student population has grown, so it's naturally more diversified. I honestly don't think we have done anything significantly different to change those numbers."

Both students and faculty were honored to be placed in the College Board's AP Honor Roll.

Jeffrey Shorter, an AP chemistry teacher, said, "It's not a big surprise to me, because we've seen an increase in students enrolling in our classes, which have become more colorful and interesting in a positive way."

However, LHS does want to be known just for its test scores.

"A lot of great things are happening at this school, but we also don't want people to feel that that's the only reason to come to LHS," Eggleston said.

As LHS students continue their hard work, the school district may have another chance to receive the College Board's award.

"It's an annual thing based on the previous years' scores so there's the potential to go it again," Eggleston said. "It's kind of exciting."

SPEAKER - PAGE 1

Along with his mother and grandmother, Elbaum was relocated to the Warsaw ghetto as a young boy. But before long, they were on the move.

"His mom heard through the grapevine that the ghetto was going to be liquidated," explained DeWitt. "She had been working at a factory, and she ran and got a document from the director of the factory that gave her permission to keep her family in place; that document allowed them to live." Elbaum never knew exactly how his mother obtained that document, but it saved his life.

He, his mother and his grandmother found a metal shed in the ghetto to hide in, that "had a hole in the roof so that he could see the sky," said DeWitt. "He talked about seeing a Nazi airplane and just thinking 'that is freedom.'"

Elbaum's experience with airplanes during the war led to a lifelong dedication to flight. He is now an aeronautical engineer, has learned to fly, and enjoys hang-gliding.

When the time came to move on from the ghetto, Elbaum and his mother were separated from his grandmother. After the war, they found out that she had been given up to the Nazis.

Elbaum spent his early childhood moving from one Polish family to another. When one household became unsafe, his mother would find him a new location, leaving him there while she found work. Claudia Tate, a senior in the Facing History class, explained, "George's mother would find George every six months... bring him presents, and then go back to work."

Eventually, Soviet soldiers freed Elbaum and his mother, and they immigrated to the U.S. For many years, Elbaum kept his memories of the Holocaust to himself.

"He only started telling his story last April," said DeWitt.

Tate explained that personal stories are essential to understanding genocides.

"Hearing statistics, like the number of people that died, is numbing," she said.

Tova Weinronk, also a senior in the Facing History class, agreed. "It is difficult to grasp exactly what an atrocity as big as the Holocaust was from just reading facts on paper," she said. "Listening to a survivor speak gives us a personal lens in which we can view what happened." Although she had already heard another Holocaust survivor speak, Weinronk still felt moved by Elbaum's words. "Walking into the presentation … I knew that I would be touched by his stories, but I did not realize that I would be touched or intrigued to the extent that I was," she said.

DeWitt said that the main message she felt her students took away from the presentation was that Elbaum survived, in many ways, through luck. There are countless "what-if" stories -- times when one small occurrence could have changed everything.

This is the purpose of the Facing History class; to understand how small acts can be life-altering, and how genocides come to take place.

"It comes down to the little daily choices that we make, and I think we oftentimes make those choices without thinking how they could have larger repercussions," said DeWitt. "When we talk about the Holocaust, we talk about how Hitler took these very small steps in very small increments to normalize and isolate specific groups of people, and that made it okay. But if people had sat up and said 'we're not okay with this' could that have altered the course of history?"

Musket finds racial disparity between staff and students

■ Jamie Yang
Stephanie Yin
Staff Writers

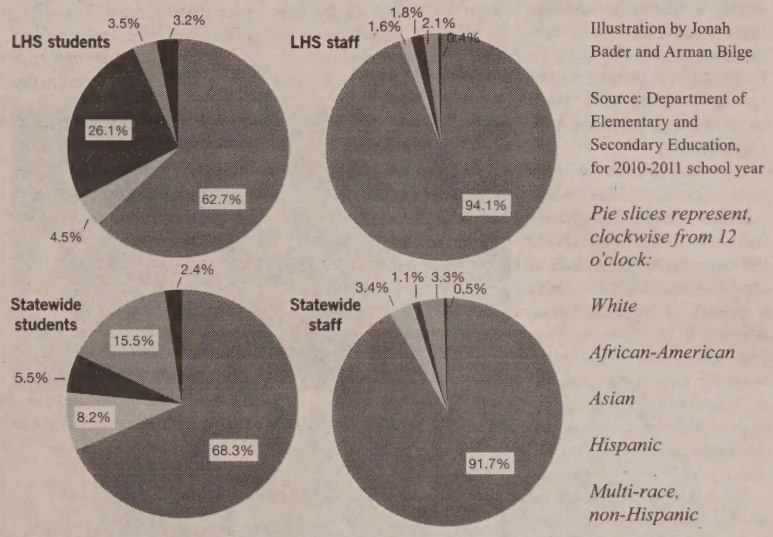


Illustration by Jonah Bader and Arman Bilge

Source: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, for 2010-2011 school year

Pie slices represent, clockwise from 12 o'clock:

White

African-American

Asian

Hispanic

Multi-race, non-Hispanic

Diversity is an important issue in Lexington, with the school system serving a racially mixed population of students.

However, a recent compilation of findings from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education found that the staff at LHS lags far behind students in terms of racial diversity.

Lester Eggleston, director of guidance and counseling and one of the black faculty members at the school, shared his opinion on the diversity of the LHS staff.

"I know how teachers are hired and there is no rule [regarding race] because teachers are encouraged to come and first we look for strong teachers in general," he said.

Eggleston explained that the hiring process does not look at race or gender, but rather at what a teacher can bring to the community.

"Teachers have to like kids first," he said. "We look at how comfortable the teacher would be also and we try to be as anti-bias as possible."

However, some feel that race is nevertheless an important factor in student-teacher relationships.

"I remember when I was in school there were only white teachers," said Mary Alice Samii, a Spanish teacher. "But when I finally got a teacher that shared my ethnic group I was kissing her feet because I could relate to her."

Eggleston mentioned that Lexington does participate in a program that aims to provide support and encouragement for racially diverse students to become teachers.

The organization, called Today's Students Tomorrow's Teachers, mentors and supports culturally diverse and economically challenged students and helps them attend college and return to their communities as teachers.

"Most years, there are School Committee meetings in Boston where the director of human resources talks to parents about opportunities such as these," said Eggleston.

Samii said she believes that greater action is necessary to increase faculty diversity.

"As teachers we have to be able to reach all students," she said. "If they want minority teachers then … they have to be putting up advertisements in areas where they will find the appropriate teachers."

Although Jieying Yao, a Mandarin teacher, recognized the disparity between student and faculty diversity, she said that it does not make her feel uncomfortable.

"Everyone is friendly and we teach our students to be open-minded and appreciative of all cultures," she said.

When asked about their opinions on the diversity of teachers, many students agreed that teaching ability is what matters the most.

"It doesn't matter to me what race my teachers are as long as they teach well," said sophomore Kira Daglio Fine.

Tanaz Abid, another sophomore, echoed this sentiment.

"I don't think about the race of my teachers and it doesn't change how I feel about them," she said.

"Growing up in this pluralistic society, it doesn't really matter to me what race anyone is," Abid said.

Other students, however, expressed a desire for greater staff diversity.

"We need more Asian teachers," said Donna Petitti, a junior. "We would feel more comfortable if there were more."

Among racial minorities, the gap between the percentage of Asian students and teachers is the largest at LHS.

Commentary from China: Education in a new culture

■ Maria Ivanenko
Columnist

Adjusting to a new lifestyle has really brought out the best and worst in me, from pure joy at being able to understand a phone call to complete frustration at how different everything is.

Noticing and overcoming the many cultural differences can be really overwhelming, but nothing is more overwhelming than the culture clashes that play out in school here.

There are so many differences between the education here and that of the United States that I don't even know where to begin. In addition, keep in mind that I am writing from the point of view of a freshman in high school here, so the situation gets much more extreme as senior year approaches.

The sheer number of hours people spend in school is incredible. People sometimes wake up as early as six in the morning to get to school around seven. They then have a period of reading aloud, whether it be Chinese, English, history or some other subject. This is considered a "homework period" rather than a real class, although it definitely takes a toll on the mind.

Each period from then on is 45 minutes long, with each day having a "nap time" during lunch. Rest times vary from being just one-and-a-half hours long (my host sister's) to three hours long (mine). These are often not restful, though. Extracurricular clubs or sports take place then, as well as other productive activities, like more studying or sleeping at desks.

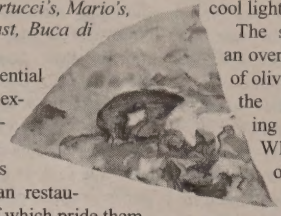
Afterward, the students go back to class and study until 6 p.m., which is when they go home. My sister quickly eats dinner and then goes to her room to do her usual two (or more) hours of homework.

All of this studying is directed towards one goal: a high score on the *gaokao*, or college entrance exam, the only way to get a university-level education in China.

[CHINA, page 7]

A slice of Lexington: Four local pizzerias reviewed

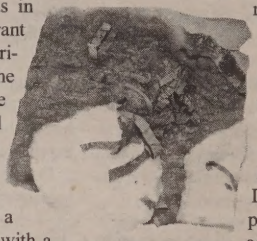
■ Dan Bernstein
Staff Writer



(Pizzas, clockwise starting top left: Bertucci's, Mario's, Upper Crust, Buca di Beppo.)

An essential aspect of Lexington's diverse cuisine is its many Italian restaurants, all of which pride themselves on excellent pizza. But which is the best, and where can you get the best value?

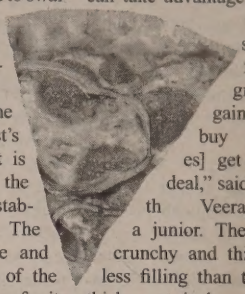
To answer this question, I visited four pizzerias in town. Each restaurant has its positive attributes ("the sweet"), the not-so-positive ("the sour") and the overall impressions ("the aftertaste").



Buca Di Beppo: The sweet: Even on a busy Saturday night with a full house, Buca Di Beppo can churn out a pizza in less than 20 minutes. Its artisan pizza style is an impressive alternative to the traditional circular pizzas one finds at any other joint in town. The interior space is well-furnished, too, complete with walls adorned by photographs and serene, cool lighting.

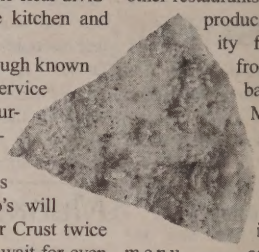
The sour: At times, an overwhelming scent of olive oil wafts from the pizza, detracting from the taste. While the shape of the pizza may make it seem larger, Buca Di Beppo's pizza is actually no different in size than that of other restaurants' pizza. However, expect to pay a few bucks more for the unique style and taste.

The aftertaste: Buca Di Beppo comes across as more of a sit-in eating experience than take-out. The allure of its interior beckons customers to dine-in rather than grab and go. When compared to the other pizza places in the Center, the prices are hard to swallow, though not outrageous if one has a true fondness for artisan-style pizza.



Upper Crust: The sweet: Upper Crust's distinctive thin crust is a nice change from the mainly thick-crust establishments in town. The prices are reasonable and the shop offers one of the greatest values in town for its quality. Service is exceptional, and even with such a small floor size, Upper Crust does a fantastic job of creating an aura of transparency and spaciousness with the clear dividers between the kitchen and seating area.

The sour: Though known for its speedy service on a busy Saturday night, serving just as large a clientele as Buca Di Beppo's will often take Upper Crust twice as long, and the wait for even just a large cheese pizza can be lengthy. The aftertaste: Students like that their pizzas are served hot and that they can take advantage of Upper Crust's special offers. A great bargain is "the buy 10 [slices] get one free deal," said Prashanth Veeragandham, a junior. The pizza is crunchy and thin but no less filling than that of its thick-crust rivals.



Mario's: The sweet: Mario's is consistent, time after time delivering solid and reliable Italian food. It is not focused solely on pizza as are other restaurants in town, and produces high-quality food ranging from calzones to baked ziti. But Mario's is in no way lacking when it comes to pizza, with its pizza menu as diverse and varied as any. Its prices are fair and its service exceptional.

[PIZZERIAS, page 7]

Staff photo by Andrea Stumpf

Members of the ensemble dance in the jazz-age club. The bar was the main setting of the student-written play.

Cast-written fall play 'Blue Lavender' performed at LHS

■ Julia Sun
Layout Designer

On Nov. 17, 18 and 19, the Lexington High School drama department presented the fall production "Blue Lavender," an original play written and performed by the cast and directed by the new high school drama teacher, Jillian Singer.

The play was based on several poems from a book of nursery rhymes called "Lavender's Blue." The plot was centered around two sisters, Lavender and Rosemary, who, find their paths filled with loneliness, sleeplessness and fear.

The preparation leading up to the show was a lengthy and demanding process.

"[We] created improvised scenes, performed them for the cast, discussed characters, themes and plot, created a plot outline, wrote a script, edited it and then memorized and rehearsed," said Singer.

The production began with a pre-show, where the actors walked around stage and among the audience. Whether they were deep in conversation or chasing each other, the actors would suddenly freeze from time to time.

The main setting of the play was a 1920s jazz club, owned by a sinister character called The Raven. A bartender named James resided there, as well as many performers and club-goers. Lavender and Rosemary ended up trapped in

[PLAY, page 7]

Students benefit from peer-tutoring program

■ Nicole Sekula
Staff Writer
Hoda Yehia
A&E Editor

Lexington High School has its own peer-tutoring program, yet some people continue to pay for outside tutoring. Why?

Since last year, the Learning Center has been home to the peer tutoring program, which is led by teacher Veronica Solomon.

According to Solomon, the former peer tutoring program was overseen by two LHS students who were both National Honor Society members. The program, however, was not very reliable for most students who wished to register.

"What I heard is that they would fill out a form that was on the library website and just never hear anything, and that was the end of it," Solomon said.

With the new program, students who need extra help can stop by Room 146 during any block. For more prolonged and specialized attention, they can be assigned a peer tutor that will meet with them on a one-on-one basis during specific scheduled times.

"Because I'm overseeing it, [students] are definitely going to get a response whether we have somebody or not, and I can also meet with both people face-to-face, the student and the tutor -- I can do a better job of pairing people up," Solomon said. "I think we needed a little more involvement from a faculty member to really keep it going."

The new peer-tutoring program has benefited both tutors and students receiving help.

Sydney Abrams, a junior peer tutor for English and history, enjoys tutoring other students. "It makes me really happy to know that I'm helping someone do well in school," she wrote in an email.

The program has also yielded results for students.

"I have been getting a lot of good grades since the peer-tutoring program," said Hafsatu Stevens, a senior who participates in peer tutoring.

Ben Edelstein, a senior who has been a peer tutor for over two years, wrote in an email, "I think the Learning Center is a great resource for LHS [students] to have access to."

Despite the program's accessibility and benefits, some students still resort to outside

[TUTORING, page 7]

collegebored

Interviews: No need for nerves

■ Ben Edelstein
Columnist

I have finally had my first college interviews, and now, I can discuss what has been the first enjoyable part of my college application process.

After I submitted my applications, I was contacted by alumni interviewers from two of the schools that I applied to, and we agreed on times and places to meet. I was a bit nervous, but both of them seemed nice from their emails and I figured the interviews would be fairly informal.

My first interview was on a Wednesday night in a small coffee shop in Kendall Square. I knew that the man I was meeting was a graduate student (I figured he was probably about 25 years old) but I did not know what he looked like. I arrived a few minutes early, and to my dismay, looked around and saw about 15 20-something-year-old guys. There were also a couple of younger kids around my age.

I ordered a drink and waited awkwardly for a few minutes deciding what to do. I didn't want to approach a random stranger, but I also didn't want my interviewer to think that I was late.

After a few minutes, I finally decided to approach a guy who I thought looked like he might be a grad student. I walked towards him, but just as I was about to introduce myself, I heard a voice from behind me say my name. I turned around and greeted my interviewer. Phew, that was close.

We then sat down at a table and began talking. First, he asked me some basic questions about what I wanted to major in, what extracurricular activities I participate in and why I was interested in his particular college. Afterwards, he asked me some fun questions like, "If you had $20 million (of legally acquired money), how would you spend it?"

Within a few minutes, my nerves vanished. The interviewer was really nice and we just had a normal conversation. He occasionally took notes on a piece of paper, but for the most part, he listened attentively to what I had to say.

We talked for over an hour and at the end of the interview

[COLLEGE, page 7]

Lexington students win TV production contest

■ Claire Huang
Staff Writer

After only two years of training, Lexington High School seniors James Cullen and Kyle George can already be considered award-winning filmmakers.

Last May, the duo created a short video that won a public service announcement contest sponsored by the Middlesex District Attorney's Office. Their PSA was broadcast on local television channels and the students were invited to appear on Fox News in June.

Out of the 165 schools in the county that participated, four out of the five finalists chosen were LHS students.

Based on the topic of cyber safety, Cullen and George's 40-second PSA depicts a student playing an automobile video game while texting a friend. Ultimately, the car on the screen crashes through a rail, leaving viewers with the message: "If you can't do it in a video game, how are you supposed to do it in real life?"

Cullen and George got the idea of the PSA when TV production teacher Mary Pappas suggested that they join the contest. They felt that doing this project would make a difference in the community.

"I see [texting and driving] happening a lot near our school. We hope that our video can connect with the teenage community," said Cullen.

"James and Kyle submitted a creative and compelling PSA, relaying their message in a meaningful way to their peers, and I congratulate them on creating the winning entry," District Attorney Gerry Leone wrote in a press release.

Pappas agreed that the theme of texting while driving "clicks" with teens.

"I've seen students very impressed with the PSA," she said. "It speaks their language and is so very believable as well as shocking, which is what makes the PSA so successful."

Cullen first got into TV production by taking the TV I class his sophomore year. As the year progressed, he became interested in the subject.

"Beginners sometimes don't see the work needed to be put into a production," said Cullen. "Mrs. Pappas is a great teacher in this aspect, and she helped me develop and hone my skills."

In regards to the technical aspects of the PSA, Pappas added, "Students learn about how timing and editing can make or break a project. If you look at James' and Kyle's PSA, the editing was tight, with no extra shots."

Also the president of the Tunnel Vision Film Club at LHS, Cullen advises anyone who is interested in TV production to take the classes in school in order to get a hands-on experience.

Currently, Cullen is collaborating with Gabi Cortez, also a senior, to create a video called "50 People, 1 Question" as an independent study. By asking the same question to everyone, he is looking to "get personal" and engage pedestrians in "deep conversations."

This new project has yielded successful results. One of the most poignant videos, in Cortez's opinion, featured a man who became permanently disabled after he was in a car accident due to drunk driving. After inquiring about their project, he launched immediately into his story.

"He was so open to it and so willing to tell us about his experience, it was like he cared that we knew what happened to him because he didn't want us to make the same mistake he did," said Cortez.

So far, George has built up an impressive high school producing career. Last year, he won first prize at the annual LHS Film Festival, which is held at the Lexington Venue. He hopes to continue his studies in film and TV production after high school.

"I believe Kyle has a great future in film and digital effects," said Pappas. "I am very proud of both James and Kyle."

Members of the new StarCraft Club compete, hone their skills

■ Grace Ma
Staff Writer

The newest gaming club at LHS is the StarCraft Club. They meet after school on Wednesdays in Room 700.

Founded by Tim Mock, a senior, the club offers StarCraft players the opportunity to meet and challenge each other or just watch matches.

Members play matches that can last between six minutes to an hour, said Cassandra Lee, a junior. Members of the StarCraft Club play against each other and against online players from around the world.

"When we battle each other ... it's just whoever wants to play, but when you play online, then it matches you up with someone around your level," Lee said.

In the matches, each player attempts to attack the other's buildings and units while creating an army. A player wins when he or she has destroyed the opponent's buildings or when the opponent has surrendered.

After noticing StarCraft's popularity in school, Mock realized that creating a club for the game would be a good idea. He said that having an official club would make it "more organized" and allow members to "learn better and have more fun."

Mock bought StarCraft 2 when it was first released. He plays several hours of the game each day, and he plans to continue to play in college.

"StarCraft is life," he said.

The club has access to a limited number of laptops, so members typically gather around one or two computers and frequently watch replays of matches or observe the matches of others. During a match, they often contribute commentaries and suggestions to the player.

Members have different levels of commitment to the game.

"I play two hours every other day. Other people play every day," said Kevin Kwak, a junior. Experienced players can also make money from the game, but experience is not necessary for people who want to join the StarCraft Club.

Kwak was introduced to StarCraft when he was in South Korea, where the game is extremely popular. He got into it because he "liked the strategy that is used."

When asked why she joined, Lee said, "I guess the club just has more people for you to talk strategy with and we also join tournaments with other schools, so that part's cool."

Lee first played the game as a child, "but I never forgot the experience. It was that awesome." The appeal is that "each game you play is always different, and you're always trying to be faster and outsmart your opponent," she added.

Besides taking turns playing matches, the members of the club also participate in mini-tournaments with players in other schools. Through an online association called Highschool StarLeague, people who play StarCraft from various high schools are able to connect and compete against each other.

The matches are assigned by region, and, if placed in the top four of a division, a team can continue to a StarCraft tournament.

So far, the LHS StarCraft Club has played multiple matches with other schools. The division matches will continue throughout the winter.

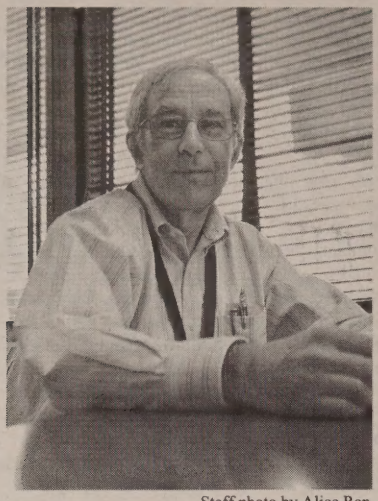
Staff photo by Jillian Jandl

Club members gather around to watch with excitement as Darwin Ding, a junior, reaches a high score in the game.

The Secret Lives of Teachers

Have you ever wondered what your teachers did before they came to LHS? Find out about three teachers' former careers.

Interviews by Evaline Han



Staff photo by Alice Ren

<< MICHAEL NORMILE

CURRENT JOB: math teacher || PAST JOB: software project manager

What was an average day at your old job like?

That's a tough question to answer. One of the interesting things about the job was that there was no such thing as an average day. Some days my responsibilities would have me out along the road meeting with customers who sometimes owned and used products that I was managing, in some cases they were prospective customers. So, in some cases I would be working with the sales team and helping to convince a customer to purchase our product, some days I would be talking with existing customers about their experience with using the product, what they liked, what they didn't like, what they'd like to see changed, how they would like to see the product enhanced. Other days I would be working with the engineers. So the job was tremendously varied. There was no such thing as an average day.

How did you get your job as a teacher?

There was an ad in the paper one July, and it said that Lexington had an opening for a high school math teacher, and so I sent my resume and so forth and I contacted Mr. Simon, the department head, and he emailed back and said, gee, there was a mistake in the ad, because he didn't have any positions. But then right before Labor Day, he had a teacher who suddenly resigned. So he was in a bit of a pickle; he had to hire somebody in a hurry, and he saw my contact information and he called me up and said, well, was I still available, was I still interested? I said, sure, and I came in, and I interviewed and to make a long story shorter, I wound up with a job.

SANDRA DiMARTINO >>

CURRENT JOB: drama teacher || PAST JOB: professional theater worker

What was your job before becoming a teacher?

Before I was a teacher I worked for professional theater companies, I worked in marketing, and box office, and development, which is fundraising, for the different theaters.

What was your average day like?

Well, it certainly started a lot later than it starts here. I would usually be at work by 9, and often I would work from 9 to 5, but I might have a meeting with a client, I might be arranging the opening night party and have to go to a restaurant and talk to the manager, and then many nights I would work the box office selling tickets for the show.

How did you get your job as a teacher?

Well, I was trained to teach theater, music and English. And when I came back from one of my jobs, I applied because Lexington had a part-time opening at the middle school, at Clarke. So I got the job there and also kept working at a professional theater up at Boston.

Why did you stop and become a teacher?

Oh, I missed being with the kids. I went to a matinee for one of the theaters I was working with and it was all high school students; it was a performance of "Twelfth Night" and just listening to everyone's excitement about it, and hearing them talk, I said, I really missed being with the students, so I went back to being a teacher.

Staff photo by Alice Ren

Photo courtesy of Sean Hagan

<< SEAN HAGAN

CURRENT JOB: art coordinator || PAST JOB: animator/digital artist

What was your job before becoming a teacher?

I worked for Tom Snyder Productions as an animator and a digital artist, and basically they make educational software and also they make educational animations. I worked there for six years.

Did you enjoy it?

Oh, yeah. The hours were -- actually, much longer than being a teacher -- that wasn't the reason I left but- it's different, it's better; I like teaching more because you can see the impact immediately, versus if you're making a product you don't get to see the end result, really, unless you're in the classroom.

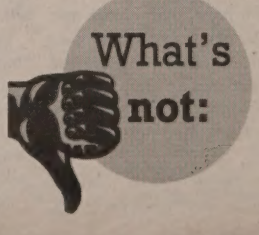
What was your average day like?

We get in at 8:30 and it would be a 10 or 11 hour day, probably about 10 hours at the computer, just drawing, drawing for 10 hours a day, and you'd take a little bit of a lunch. It was mostly drawing for ten hours on the computer -- your eyes get tired, your hand gets tired, but it's great.

Why did you stop and become a teacher?

I think I just needed something different. It's a lot to do for six or seven years. So, you get two weeks off-- so that's 50 weeks a year times 10 hours a day-- so that's 500 hours a week, on the computer, so that's 25,000 hours looking at a computer. I needed a change of pace. So I think that's the main reason.

- Hot chocolate
- Keeping your New Year's resolutions
- Not having to shovel snow



- Insignificant amount of snowfall
- Long-term projects
- The difficulty of finding a good pencil sharpener

CHINA - PAGE 4

Not only are the hours different, but the subjects are, too.

The emphasis here is on science and math, which is fundamentally different from America, where it is equally distributed between the sciences and the humanities.

But the main difference is way the classes are run. Students are generally not be given the chance to speak or share their opinions in class because usually the teacher just lectures them.

Gone are the group discussions I've grown accustomed to and the lively debates where participation is encouraged. Instead, I find myself sitting in a classroom with 50 or more other students, dead silent, taking notes as the teacher talks.

Instead of students getting up between classes and moving to another room for another class, it is the teachers that come and go. Therefore, students are stuck with the same group of people for the entire day.

Nonetheless, this results in many close friendships due to the amount of time spent with the same people. In addition, the class size is huge here, and so students still meet a lot of other people. I am lucky that I only have 30 people in my class, but my sister has 56 and a friend once had 80 in his middle school class.

Finally, there is a large difference in the relationship between teachers and students. Here, teachers may be considered friends outside of class, especially if they are the head teacher. A head teacher is somewhat similar to a dean but has a much closer relationship with students.

The head teachers give out punishments and notices for upcoming events, but they also check in on students every once in a while just to see how they're doing. Unlike student-teacher relationships in high school in the States, students are often invited to teachers' homes just to chat or have lunch.

I have actually become best friends with my Chinese teacher, but that may be because she's only 23. However, teachers are the same in position here as they are back home: They still want students to study hard and do their work.

School is certainly a major challenge that I have had to get used to here. Ironically, I can't even imagine ending school at 2:25 now, while before, I couldn't imagine ending school at 5.

TUTORING - PAGE 4

adult tutoring, which can often be expensive.

Solomon does not know why, but understands that it often depends on the student's needs.

"I would say some people feel they want a private, in-home tutor, and maybe that is where their student will learn the most, so they are willing to pay for that service," she said. "[Also] some students aren't comfortable struggling in front of other students."

Leah Leshchinsky, a junior who currently receives outside adult tutoring for math, offers a different view.

"Well, I think teachers have more information, like if you get a tutor, and you are paying them, they have credentials, so [they are] somebody you are sure has a background studying the subject, and just knows more," she said. " You can spend more time with them [and] you don't have to be in school, [so it] might be more convenient," she said.

The cost, for her, is worth it. "It depends how much help you need, but, yeah, in my case, it is [worth it]," she added.

But although Leshchinsky still prefers outside tutoring, she said that the current peer tutoring program "sounds like a good deal, and its definitely worth trying for anyone who needs help before getting an outside tutor."

COLLEGE - PAGE 5

he asked me to email him if I ever had any questions about the school.

Overall, I really enjoyed the experience. It wasn't at all stressful, and it was a good opportunity to ask questions about the college and have them answered by someone with firsthand experience. Since I had researched and visited the school beforehand, I already knew a lot about it and was able to ask specific questions that weren't answered on the Internet.

My second interview was similar and I found it to be an equally rewarding experience.

For those of you that plan on having an interview in the future, here's my advice: It's a good idea to research the college beforehand and think of some specific questions to ask (both of my interviewers asked if I had any questions). Also, there is no need to be nervous. College interviews are usually informal, and the interviewer just wants to have a conversation with you — you may even end up having fun.

PLAY - PAGE 4

the club, lured by the prospect of fame and happiness.

In the club scenes, there were outstanding performances by the actors that included singing, dancing, and playing instruments that aptly displayed the talents of the actors.

"Some of the strongest aspects of the play are the creative and surprising elements of the story and the ways in which the unique talents of the cast have been utilized," said Singer.

The set was beautifully constructed, especially the colorful bar, and the use of a dark, transparent mesh-like curtain was very creative. The costumes were also well-designed, with each character dressed in period clothing that evoked his or her personality and purpose in the play.

As an audience member with no background information about the nursery rhymes, the plot was unclear for the majority of the play. Even though the storyline became clearer by the end, the beginning led to a lot of confusion.

The most powerful element of the play was the emotions that came through the performances of the actors. The feelings of fear, love and sorrow that were evoked in a production written by high school students were far more sophisticated than expected.

Despite the confusing plot, the power of the ideas nevertheless made the play worthwhile for the audience.

SPIRIT - PAGE 8

"A unifying school spirit seems difficult to achieve with our wide variety of people," said Julia Leung, a senior.

Martin also pointed out that with four separate buildings, it is hard to achieve a feeling of community.

In her opinion, the space between buildings are a large factor standing in the way of the school's "togetherness." With the school's multitude of clubs and activities, Martin "would love to see Lexington bridge a friendship and a community of both students and teachers" and bring them together as one cohesive body.

Nevertheless, there is not one accepted theory explaining Lexington's dearth of spirit. Strohmeyer disagrees that the size of the student population is responsible.

"I think having a larger high school should make school spirit easier," he said, "because you have more people than most other schools and can cheer louder than them."

PIZZERIAS - PAGE 4

The sour: Its seating area, can also feel overcrowded at times. The wait for a table can often be long, especially at night or on half-days when students flock to the pizzeria.

The aftertaste: Mario's is reliable, though not stellar when compared to other pizza shops. It does a terrific job of dishing up simple, decent Italian food. A great pick for an evening out with the family or a lunch with friends, Mario's has the most dynamic menu, catering to the palates of more than just the pizza lover.

Bertucci's: The sweet: Variety is a hallmark of Bertucci's. From its margherita pizza to its signature sandwiches, the restaurant is diverse in its options. Boasting its own brick-oven pizza style and tasty and inexpensive bread rolls, Bertucci's attracts all ages. With fresh ingredients and complimentary bread and olive oil, the servings are always generous.

The sour: The whole dine-in experience can be a lengthy process. On most nights it is excusable since the restaurant can be extremely packed, but not so much when there are only a few customers and the service is just as slow. It can also be very loud inside as it is quite a hub for families with children.

The aftertaste: Bertucci's, while offering multiple varieties of pizza, is nothing outstanding. The crust can be hit or miss, while the level of grease on the tray can be an unfortunate turn-off. The service is unsatisfactory at times.

(Photo credit to: Thomas Marge, Jonah Bader, Arman Bilge. Illustration by Greg Hines)

TENNIS - PAGE 8

play as long as it doesn't touch the ground again on your side. Unfortunately, I am reminded of this rule every time I get a fantastic spiking opportunity--I hit it much too hard and it bounces off the far fence for an easy return. Oh, the woes of being too strong ...

After 90 minutes of play, and a slightly increased pulse to show for it, we call it a wrap and trickle back home to finish cooking our hard-earned Thanksgiving feast.

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2011 - 2012

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Girls' varsity hockey team takes measures to prevent concussions

■ Nicole Sekula
Staff Writer

This year, the girl's varsity hockey team aims to repeat last year's successes while preventing concussions and other head injuries.

Although last year's team qualified for the second round of playoffs, five players unfortunately suffered from concussions.

Carolyn Avery, a junior on the team, experienced a concussion before the hockey season had started last year.

"I was out for nine months," she said, "so I missed half the fall season, the whole hockey season and the entire spring season."

Because concussions are a type of brain injury, they represent a serious threat to athletes' health.

According to Eamonn Sheehan, the LHS athletic trainer, sleeping troubles, headaches, grogginess and memory issues can all result from concussions.

"In sports, it affects your ability to react to things and your ability to process things," he said.

Furthermore, second impact concussions can cause a lot of damage to the brain, which is why it is vital for them to be dealt with right away.

However, it is often very difficult to avoid a concussion.

"We've always taken caution that the equipment is up to date," coach Amanda Ciarletta said, "but in hockey, contact is unavoidable."

In recent years, the team has begun taking extra measures to ensure safety on and off the ice. Before the season started, players took an online test to establish a baseline.

In the event of a concussion, a player can take the test again, and the difference between the new score and the baseline will indicate whether or not she is safe to return to play.

"The preseason online test really got me to start thinking about concussions," said Robin Gross, a junior on the team. "We had to watch these videos about playing safe sports and knowing the symptoms of a concussion and knowing what to do if you think you have one."

Staff photo by Thaya Psyhojos

Members of the girls' varsity hockey team skate during a practice at the Hayden ice rink.

If a player has a concussion, and she receives a second blow to the head, she may take even longer to recover and her concussion may get worse.

Ciarletta said that the test, therefore, "ensures that the players are set to go before they even hit the ice."

In addition to these tests, players are also participating in yoga two days a week on top of their regular scheduled practices.

They are working with trainer Tim Thomas, known for his work with the Boston Bruins, who will help them build up strength as well. Ciarletta said this will allow their bodies to absorb the blows better when they get hit.

Gross also mentioned other safety measures the team is taking.

"Some girls also wear concussion-safe helmets, which I think just has some extra padding to keep your head from moving around in the helmet," she said.

"We [also] do make sure everyone plays heads-up hockey, meaning everyone looks and makes sure they understand their surroundings."

CHEER SQUAD BRINGS IT ON AT COMPETITION

The Lexington High School cheerleading squad's score at the Division 1 league competition earned them a spot in the 2011 Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association North Regional competition.

Overall, the squad was proud of this achievement.

"We improved over last year a lot," said Sara Wichlei, a member of the squad. "Since I am a junior, I've seen how we've done so much better in the last three years. We've made so much progress and we'll just keep getting better. It's rewarding to see that we've accomplished so much."

Raina Joseph, a senior captain, added that the success of the cheerleaders this season was because of the girls coming together as a team.

"We really need to work together because we rely on each other to succeed and to keep everyone safe," Wichlei said. "If one person doesn't do their job, it doesn't hurt just them, but potentially someone else. Someone could get badly hurt if we aren't all trying our hardest. We're always there for games and we cheer like it's our job. We take pride in our team and we know we're improving and we all have the desire to keep working so hard for our goals." He is confident about the upcoming season. "It's a privilege to lead this football program as its head coach," he said. "I believe we are very close to being a dynamic team."

(By Chris Wisdom and Ellen Meyers; Photo courtesy of Taylor Wilson)

Do Lexington students lack in school spirit?

■ Eugenia Kim
Emily Hu
Staff Writers

Lexington High School is known for its academic and athletic excellence, and students earn a vast number of awards each year. As a school, LHS is very high-achieving.

However, some students and faculty members believe that when it comes to school spirit, LHS is lacking.

Unlike most high schools, LHS has not had homecoming dances or prom royalties in recent memory, which begs the question of how much spirit LHS actually has.

In the past, LHS has experienced ups and downs when it comes to school spirit. One of the biggest annual events is Volley for Molly, an event in its third year. It is a unique time when almost all sports teams unite in support of the girls' volleyball team.

However, aside from this event, many students believe that LHS has not really reached the level of school spirit that other schools have.

"I think students, especially sports teams, have good spirit, but it isn't supported by the school," said Kathryn Taylor, a junior.

This year, the school administration scheduled a pep rally for Nov. 23, the half-day before Thanksgiving. It was intended to allow all the classes to participate together in an event to raise school spirit. The class councils planned events, including a three-legged race and a pie-eating contest.

But because of the rainy weather conditions, the pep rally was canceled.

According to Zachary Strohmeyer, treasurer of the junior class, the Class Council still has future plans.

"We are going to try to have [a pep rally] this spring," he said. "As for next year, we will try to plan it earlier in the year so we have time to make it up if the weather is unfortunate."

Naomi Martin, the LHS athletic director, also has several ideas about the pep rally next year. One possibility is to move the event to an earlier date to accommodate weather changes. Another is to have the pep rally at night.

Some members of the LHS community cite open campus and the large student population as barriers to school spirit.

[SPIRIT, page 7]

Sports Digest: An alternative to tennis

■ Ali Boreiko
Columnist

My family, like most families, has some weird holiday traditions. Our Thanksgiving tradition is playing a fun and quirky sport: paddle tennis.

My aunt belongs to a country club, which is the kind of place where I feel underdressed for playing sports and where the signs say things such as "Drive Leisurely" and "Speed Limit: 24 mph."

We turn the corner to find the paddle tennis courts. They are 50 feet long and 20 feet wide, about the size of the Black Box Theatre at LHS. They are scaled-down versions of tennis courts, surrounded by a 10-foot-tall fence all the way around.

We grab our rackets, or "paddles." Paddles don't have strings and are also wooden, about an inch thick with holes bored through the face.

The balls are similar to tennis balls, but the internal pressure is decreased so that when dropped from a height of six feet, the ball bounces between 31 and 33 inches.

Paddle tennis was invented in 1915 in lower Manhattan as a game for kids in the city. Over the century it has transformed into an organized sport with many leagues and matches managed by the U.S. Paddle Tennis Association.

Although it is obscure, paddle tennis is really quite fun. It is a great sport for anyone from beginners to pros (yes, there is professional paddle tennis, although I imagine you'd have to keep a second job).

The rallies are also very fast-paced and require quick reactions. Additionally, there is little time spent collecting balls after each point because the balls rarely leave the cage.

We promptly begin rallying, and I'm finding it rather challenging to get the ball in bounds on the other side of the court. There's something about the ball's decreased internal pressure that makes it tough to get over the net without hitting it out of bounds.

I am also soon reminded of the rule in paddle tennis that makes the sport so much fun: You can play off the walls!

If the ball bounces in bounds and then against a wall, it is in

[TENNIS, page 7]